

BACKGROUNDER 1-0295
FREUND/SARAJEVO

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YUGOSLAV: THE SARAJEVO CLEAN UP

ANNCR:

A GROUP OF YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS IS TRAVELLING TO WORLD BANK HEADQUARTERS IN WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS FINAL DETAILS OF THE BANK'S FIRST ANTI-POLLUTION LOAN. V-O-A CORRESPONDENT LARRY FREUND HAS MORE ON THE PROJECT IN SARAJEVO, YUGOSLAVIA. VOICE:

SARAJEVO IS A CENTURIES OLD MAGNET FOR TRAVELLERS AND SETTLERS. THE RESULT IS THE PATCHWORK POPULATION OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL GROUPS MAKING THEIR HOME IN THE VALLEY CITY, STRETCHED BETWEEN THE RUGGED GREEN BOSNIAN MOUNTAINS.

THERE WERE SOME SIXTY THOUSAND PEOPLE IN THE CITY AT THE END OF WORLD WAR TWO; NOW THERE ARE THREE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND BUILDING TO A POPULATION OF HALF A MILLION BY THE END OF THE CENTURY. ONE RESULT OF THIS MUSHROOMING GROWTH HAS BEEN SUPER POLLUTION. A RIVER THAT DURING THE SUMMER IS ONLY ONE THIRD WATER, THE REST, RAW SEWAGE.

IN NINETEEN FOURTEEN, ONE OF THE YOUNG MEN PLOTTING TO ASSASSINATE THE AUSTRIAN ARCHDUKE FERNAND IN SARAJEVO JUMPED INTO THE MILJACKA RIVER, AFTER TOSSING HIS BOMB. THAT WAS MORE THAN SIXTY YEARS AGO, AND THE RIVER WAS CLEAN THEN. BUT IN A NEW MOVIE VERSION OF THE SAME EVENT BUILT ON LOCATION IN SARAJEVO, A YOUNG ACTOR HAD TO DUPLICATE THE LEAP, AND SOME OBSERVERS WERE CONCERNED WHETHER HE COULD SURVIVE CONTACT WITH THE POLLUTED RIVER. LAST SEEN, THE ACTOR WAS STILL HEALTHY.

BUT DIRTY WATER IS JUST PART OF THE POLLUTION PROBLEM IN SARAJEVO, ANOTHER IS INSURING A SUPPLY OF CLEAN DRINKING WATER, AND SENDING IT THROUGH OLD AND LEAKY PIPES.

AND THEN THERE IS THE SARAJEVO AIR: OFTEN, DURING THE WINTER, A NOXIOUS BLANKET OF COLD AND AUTO EXHAUST FUMES BEYOND THE REACH OF FRESH BREEZES THAT ARE BLOCKED BY THE SURROUNDING MOUNTAINS.

SARAJEVO'S ANSWER TO ITS CHOKING POLLUTION PROBLEM IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, TEN YEARS IN THE MAKING, TO CLEAN UP THE CITY. ENGINEERS HAVE PRODUCED THE SCHEME TO KEEP SARAJEVO'S SEWAGE OUT OF THE RIVER, AND SEND IT INSTEAD TO A NEW WASTE TREATMENT PLANT.

NEW PIPES WILL BE PLACED UNDER THE CITY'S STREETS TO CARRY FRESH WATER. AND A NEW ONE HUNDRED KILOMETER PIPELINE WILL BE CONSTRUCTED TO CARRY NATURAL GAS TO SARAJEVO, ELIMINATING THE NEED FOR SEVERAL HUNDRED HEATING PLANTS IN THE CITY TO BURN SMOKE-PRODUCING COAL.

THE BILL FOR THE CLEANUP PROJECT WILL COME TO ABOUT TWO HUNDRED THIRTEEN MILLION DOLLARS. ONE-THIRD OF THAT -- SEVENTY-TWO MILLION DOLLARS -- IS BEING PROVIDED BY THE WORLD BANK... THE ORGANIZATION'S FIRST EASY TERM LOAN FOR AN ANTI-POLLUTION PROJECT.

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME DELAY IN COMPLETING DETAILS OF THE LOAN ARRANGEMENT, BUT OFFICIALS IN SARAJEVO ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO SIGNING AN AGREEMENT WITH THE WORLD BANK THIS SPRING. WORK WILL THEN GET UNDERWAY ON THE GAS PIPELINE. AND A YEAR FROM NOW, ENGINEERS EXPECT TO HAVE MANY OF SARAJEVO'S COBBLESTONE STREETS TORN UP FOR NEW WATER AND SEWAGE PIPES. THE TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION IS NINETEEN EIGHTY.

WE ARE BUILDING FOR OUR CHILDREN, SAYS ONE CITY OFFICIAL. AND HE ADDS CAUTIOUSLY, I HOPE THEY WON'T CURSE US.

JS/CAK